

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
November 20, 1973, Number 11  
LP-0752

300 STATE STREET HOUSE, Borough of Brooklyn, Built c. 1848.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 176, Lot 10.

On June 23, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 300 State Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 67). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty-six witnesses spoke in favor of historic preservation in the Boerum Hill neighborhood and for the creation of the Boerum Hill Historic District. There were no speakers in opposition to designation of the houses on State Street.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

No. 300 State Street is one of a pair of two adjoining Italianate houses built for John W. Towl, a hardware merchant, who acquired the property for Nos. 300 and 302 in November 1847, as well as two adjoining lots, back to back, fronting on Atlantic Avenue. He moved into a house built on one of the Atlantic Avenue lots in 1848. Presumably the two State Street houses were built about the same time.

These residences were part of the Boerum Hill community which had formed the original Town of Breuckelen founded in 1646 by Dutch colonists. It was incorporated into the larger City of Brooklyn in 1834. The development of Boerum Hill as an urban community began in the 1840s and continued into the 1870s. Many of the houses which remain from this period incorporate Greek Revival and Italianate elements in the row house design. These houses were built for merchants and professional people, many of whom worked in the Wall Street area or in the vicinity of the Fulton Street ferry.

All the land in this block had originally been part of the Jacob Van Brunt farm. He willed it to his daughter, Jane, wife of Samuel T. Gerritsen, in 1824. State Street was originally known as Gerritsen Street. The Gerritsens and the Van Brunts, both old Dutch families, had long been interconnected by marriage and had some of the largest landholdings in Kings County. Charles Hoyt and Russell Nevins, two Manhattan real estate developers with extensive interests in Brooklyn, acquired the properties on this block in 1833. Both Hoyt and Nevins had streets named after them to the east of this block. Development on this side of the street began about 1847; consequently, many of the houses exhibit certain stylistic similarities. Like several others from this period, Nos. 300 and 302 are characteristic of the new Italianate style. These two three-and-a-half story houses have brick fronts with brownstone trim. Well preserved, with many of their details intact, they add an important element to the block.

No. 300 has a brick front rising three stories above a rusticated brownstone basement. The doorway, set above a high stoop, is accentuated by a broad shallow triangular pediment set above a frieze which is supported on carved brackets. Similar pediments accent the full-height parlor floor windows. The design on the wooden double doors further accentuates the pediment motif, as the central panel on each door is crowned by a pediment set on brackets. The windows have sash with wide central muntins and those of the second story are accented by lintels which have cap moldings, while those of the top story have plain ones. The roof cornice is simple, yet distinctive. With its dentils and angular console end brackets, one of which is also shared by No. 302, while those in between are paired. The handsome iron yard railing, as well as the handrailings at the stoop, are of cast iron and display curvilinear forms, typical of the Italianate style. The use of cast-iron railings with cast-iron ornament became popular in New York City in the 1850s when mass production made them readily available at reasonable prices.

#### FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the 300 State Street House has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that among its important qualities, the 300 State Street House is a fine example of the Italianate style of architecture, that it is one of a handsome pair of houses, that it contributes to the dignity of the street and that this house adds significantly to the overall character of the Boerum Hill community.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the 300 State Street House, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 176, Lot 10, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.